GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1603
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005
SAFETY EQUIPMENTS FOR PREVENTION OF SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD
Abdullakutty Shri A.P.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team of forest officials in Marayoor range in Kerala was brutally attacked recently by a gang of sandalwood smugglers;

(b) whether illegal felling and smuggling of sandalwood trees/logs have been rampant in Marayoor range with frequent raids/seizures of illegal sandalwood stocks from sandalwood oil distillation units in Palakkad district;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes to provide adequate vehicles for mobility, sophisticated arms and radio communication equipment to forest officials/guards to match those of the poachers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) Yes, Sir. The details of attack on forest officials in recent times are given in Annexure − I.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The details are given in Annexure − II.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The steps taken by the State Government of Kerala are as under:

(i) Creation of Special Task Force and deployment of Rapid Action Force

(ii) Supply of arms and ammunitions to the staff

(iii) Involvement of local people in sandal protection through 'Vanasanrakshana Samities'

(iv) Intensive patrolling of forest areas.

In addition to the above, the feasibility of electronic surveillance in protecting the sandal trees in being explored by the state Government.

ANNEXURE- II

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (C) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1603 FOR 14/03/2005 REGARDING SAFETY EQUIPMENTS FOR PREVENTION OF SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD

Year-Wise Details of Sandalwood Related Offences

Year 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004

Number of Offences 49 131 300 211 216
Trees felled 97 351 1550 836 774
Accused arrested 110 274 486 418 205
Quantity seized (in Quintals) 34.73 415.82 367.44 192.2 155.79 + 24.90 kg Sandalwood oil
Vehicles Confiscated 7 13 70 66 28

ANNEXURE- I

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (A) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1603 FOR 14/03/2005 REGARDING SAFETY EQUIPMENTS FOR PREVENTION OF SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD

Details of attacks on forest officials in recent times

S.No. Date Incident

1. 01/2005 One forest guard was intimidated by an accused involved in various offences in Marayoor Range. The guard has lodged private complaint in Police.

2. 02/2005 A dozen of forest officials got injured while attempting arrest of a sandal smuggler in Mannarkad town when a mob of approximately 200 people attacked the raiding forest and police team.

3. 09-02-2005 (FN) A gang of 30 people attacked one forester and five forest guards while they were trying to arrest one accused in Marayoor range.

4. 09-02-2005 (AN) A team of two range officers, two foresters, one guard, three watchers, one driver and one peon were wounded by some miscreants in Palland area of Marayoor Range